

Remarks

Claims 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15-18 and 19-25 are now pending in this application. Applicant has amended claims 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15-18, 19, and 20, cancelled claims 1, 5, 6, 9-11, 13, and 14 and presented new claims 23-25 to clarify the present invention. Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, and 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 4,438,817 to Pokladnik et al. The Examiner rejected claims 5-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pokladnik et al. The Examiner rejected claims 4, 21, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pokladnik et al. in view of U.S. patent 6,231,265 to Rytlewski et al.

Pokladnik et al. does not suggest the present invention as recited in newly presented independent claim 23 since, among other things, Pokladnik et al. does not suggest a structure that includes at least one projecting guide member including a plurality of generally vertically extending projections arranged about a central axis and at least one receiving guide member including a receiving structure, where each receiving structure engages the plurality of projections on the at least one projecting guide member. Rather, as shown and described in Pokladnik et al., each "receiving member" engages a single "projecting member". As such, Pokladnik et al. requires the use of guidelines that extend from a top side arrangement to guide equipment from about down on to the base structure. As a result, Pokladnik et al. is for use in shallow waters where guidelines can be used.

On the other hand, the arrangement of the present invention with the receiving structure that includes a truncated cone inner surface to guide projecting members into recesses on the receiving member. This permits the present invention to operate without the use of guidelines. As a result, the present invention may be utilized in deep water and ultra deep water applications.

The projections of Pokladnik et al., which can each only engage a separate receiving structure, do not achieve the same result as the present invention. The truncated cone shaped inner surface of the receiving structure of the present invention, which can engage the multiple projections of a projecting guide member structure, can act to guide the projections into place without the use of guidelines. The separate receiving structure that engages the multiple projections and the truncated cone surface comprising a plurality of recesses solve problems encountered in deep and ultra deep water applications. The structure of the present invention as recited in newly presented claim 23 was not the result of design choice. Clearly, the present invention as recited in newly presented independent claim 23 and Pokladnik et al. are not functional equivalents.

In view of the above, Polkadnik et al. and the present invention are two very different structures for two quite different applications. Therefore, Pokladnik et al. does not suggest the present invention as recited in newly presented independent claim 23 or any of claims 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15-18, 19-22, 24 or 25, which depend from claim 23.

Combining Pokladnik et al. with Rytlewski et al. does not suggest the present invention as recited in claims 4, 21, or 22, which depend from claim 23, since, among other things, even if

the structure suggested by Pokladnik et al. were provided with an outer layer of a low-friction material as the Examiner asserts Rytlewski et al. suggests, Pokladnik et al. would not suggest the above-discussed features of the present invention as recited in newly presented independent claim 23. Therefore, the combination of Pokladnik et al. and Rytlewski et al. does not suggest the present invention as recited in claims 4, 21, or 22.

In view of the above, the references relied upon in the office action, whether considered alone or in combination, do not suggest patentable features of the present invention. Therefore, the references relied upon in the office action do not make the present invention obvious. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the present invention is patentable over the cited references and Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections based on the cited references.

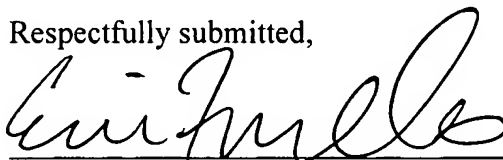
If an interview would advance the prosecution of this application, Applicant respectfully urges the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The undersigned authorizes the Commissioner to charge insufficient fees and credit overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 22-0261.

Date:

2/23/07

Respectfully submitted,



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